United Nations S/2001/793

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 August 2001

Original: English

Letter dated 15 August 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Last Friday, 10 August 2001, at about 2 p.m., a train carrying approximately 500 civilian passengers was treacherously attacked on the outskirts of a small town, Zenza do Itombe, located less than three miles from the city of Dondo in Kwanza Norte Province. Forces under Jonas Savimbi stopped the train with a landmine planted under the tracks, then fired indiscriminately at passengers as they sought to flee in panic from the devastation that ensued.

That savage act resulted in the deaths of 252 people, with more than 165 injured and left to agonize in hospital beds. It is easy to see that we are dealing with an act devoid of any military objective whose sole aim was simply to spread death, suffering and destruction of our people in the most atrocious way. Lately, we have become aware that the rebels are avoiding confrontations with government military forces and have resorted systematically to violence against defenceless communities. About 90 days ago, after having killed and brutally mistreated civilians in the city of Caxito, they kidnapped 61 children who, for several weeks, experienced enormous hardship.

At a time when the international community and the Government of Angola are developing joint efforts to create conditions for the upcoming elections in the shortest length of time and within the framework of solving the military conflict, this act reveals the real objectives of the rebels.

Given the senseless acts against civilians, I would like to call the attention of the international community in general, and of the United Nations in particular, to the crucial need to take action, and if possible redouble joint efforts aimed at gradually isolating those who choose to wage war and refuse to respect the decisions of the Security Council pertaining to the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol.

Situations such as the serious incident that took place in Zenza do Itombe are unacceptable. Equally unacceptable is the silence that exists internationally around the issue.

In the face of such a criminal act, I can only reaffirm the pledge of my Government to do everything possible to restore the feeling of hope for peace among the people of Angola.

This worthy goal should be clearly fulfilled, not just through words of intention and the dissemination of statements, but supported by action showing the

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rebels' political will to accept the Lusaka Protocol and their desire to participate in a joint undertaking for national reconciliation.

I avail myself of this opportunity to reaffirm the readiness of the Government of Angola to leave the door open for dialogue as well as its willingness to work in cooperation with all those who demonstrate that they are truly committed to peace.

I would be most grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ismael A. **Gaspar Martins**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative